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## Naval Medical Research Center Provides 52 Walk-In Clinics for Bone Marrow Donations

BY VJOHNSON – JULY 17, 2014

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By Mikelle D.Smith, Naval Medical Research Center Public Affairs

Since 1991, the Naval Medical Research Center's (NMRC) Bone Marrow Research Directorate has played a critical role in supporting DoD bone marrow drives and identifying potential bone marrow donors.



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Mario Martin swabs Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Clinton Thompson's mouth at the Naval Air Facility Atsugi commissary as part of the process in registering as a bone marrow donor through the Department of Defense (DoD) Marrow Donor Center. The organization was established to recruit volunteer marrow donors from active duty military, their immediate family members, civil service employees, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reservists. (Photo by Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Vivian Blakely)

One little known method of collection, walk-in clinics, guarantees year-around donation capabilities outside of classic DoD bone marrow drives.

There are 52 walk-in clinics throughout 25 states and four foreign countries. All walk-in clinics are managed by on-call volunteers and locations range from blood banks and hospitals, to clinics and military bases. These volunteers can answer questions and provide consent forms and mail-in kits to interested individuals.

"(The) first step to coming to a walk-in clinic to make a donation is scheduling an appointment with the on-call volunteer," said Dr. Robert Hartzman, Director of NMRC's Bone Marrow Research Directorate and the C.W. Bill Young Department of Defense Marrow Donor Recruitment and Research Program. "Once the appointment is made, the individual will show up to the walk-in clinic site and the volunteer will walk them through the buckle swab process. After they complete the donation, which includes filling out the necessary DoD paperwork, the volunteer sends the donation to us via mail."

These walk-in clinics were developed as a secondary convenient option for individuals who have a desire to be registered in the bone marrow database. Though not a primary way of collection, walk-in clinics provide the registry



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with more than 500 new potential donors per year.

“Marrow donor drives are offered at every DoD facility across the world that would like to participate,” said Hartzman. “There are more than 700,000 individuals who have registered with our bone marrow program and are familiar with the program. There are also more than 5,000 individuals in DoD, over the last 20 years, who have actually donated marrow for a transplant. Some of these individuals truly want to help gather registrants.”

For individuals interested in coordinating a bone marrow donor drive visit the Bone Marrow Salute to Life website at <https://www.salutetolife.org/joinus.html>.

Additionally, a complete list of walk-in clinic locations is available on the web site.

NMRC’s Bone Marrow Directorate provides military contingency support for casualties with marrow toxic injury due to radiation or chemical warfare agents. The directorate performs laboratory research that supports technology innovations to make highly reliable and cost-effective DNA-based typing for marrow transplants.



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